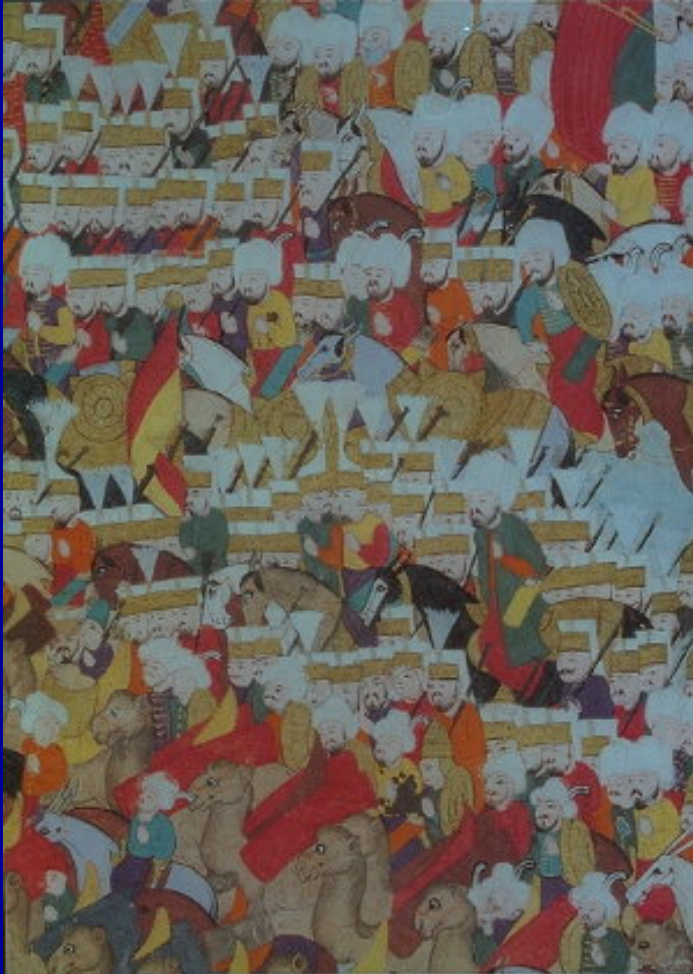


ISLAM in the Balkans



Mosque
Mostar, Bosnia

Introduction of Islam in the Balkans



- Islam first appeared in the Balkans in 1354 after the conquest of the Balkans by the Ottomans in the year 1352
- There are many arguments about the origin of the Muslims in the area, but many of them were people of other faiths including Bogomils (a dualist faith similar to Manichaeism)
- Others were pagans, who faced death if they did not convert to at least one of the “religions of the book” (Christianity, Islam, or Judaism)

Miniature, Ottoman Conquest

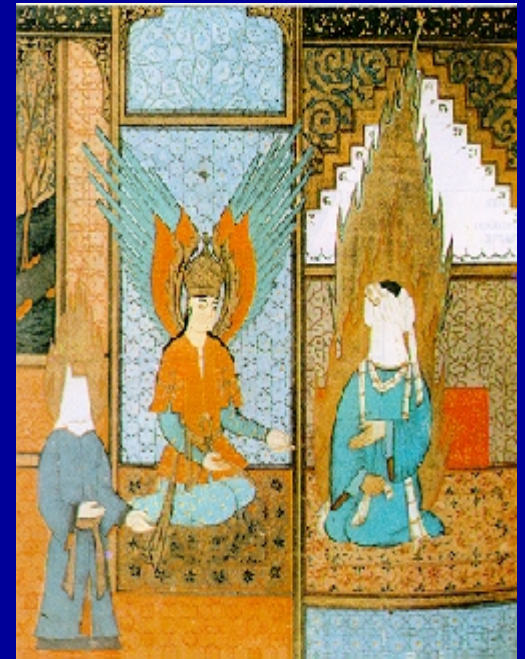
- Islam means "surrender to the will of God."
- Muslim means "one who has surrendered (to the will of God)."

Foundations of Islam

- Islam is subdivided into Sunni and Shia Islam.
- Islam in the Balkans is Sunni
- This means that they believe that the caliphate, or the spiritual and political ruler of Islam, was transferred to the right person. Shia Islam, on the other hand, disagrees.
- Universally believed is that there is one God, making it a monotheistic religion, and that Mohammed is his prophet.
- Neither God nor Mohammed are allowed to have an image in Islamic artistry

Mohammed, the absolute prophet of God

- Because the climate of Mecca was considered to be unhealthy, he was given as an infant to a wet nurse from a nomadic tribe and spent some time in the desert.
- Was a member of the merchant class of Mecca
- Mecca was prosperous, but most of the wealth was in a few hands. Tribal solidarity was breaking up; merchants pursued individual interests and disregarded their traditional duties to the unfortunate
- In the year 610 the angel Gabriel appeared to Mohammed telling Mohammed he was the messenger of God
- He experienced revelations, believed to be the words of God throughout his life until his death
- These revelations were then written down in 650 in the Qur'an
- Prior to his missionary work, many believed "Allah" to be one of many gods in the a greater pantheon



Turkish poet - Siyer-i Nebi:
The Life of the Prophet, 1595

The Five Pillars of Islam

- Prayer five times a day
- Alms to the poor
- Making the Hadj, or a trip to Mecca, if financially able
- Faith in the Oneness of God and the Finality of the Prophethood of Mohammed
- Self-Purification through Fasting

The Qu'ran (Koran)



Page from a richly illustrated Koran, captured by Selim I, The Grim in the early 16th Century

- The Qu'ran or Koran is the holy book of the Muslims
- It a collection of Suras, or chapters, and each Sura is broken down into bayt, or verses.
- It is the responsibility of every Muslim to be able to read the Qu'ran in Arabic, the original language in which it was written

The Opening, Meccan Sura

سورة الفاتحة مكية

In the name of God ; the Compassionate ; and the Merciful.

1. Praise to God, Lord of the worlds ;
2. the Compassionate; the Merciful ;
3. King of Judgement Day.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

4. We worship nobody but You,
we seek for nobody but your guidance.

الحمد لله رب العلمين

5. Lead us on the Path to Paradise

الرحمن الرحيم

6. The Path for those You favour,

7. not for those who incurred Your anger,
not for those on the false path.

ملك يوم الدين

اياك نعبد واياك نستعين

اهدنا الصراط المستقيم

صراط الذين انعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين

First page of Koran

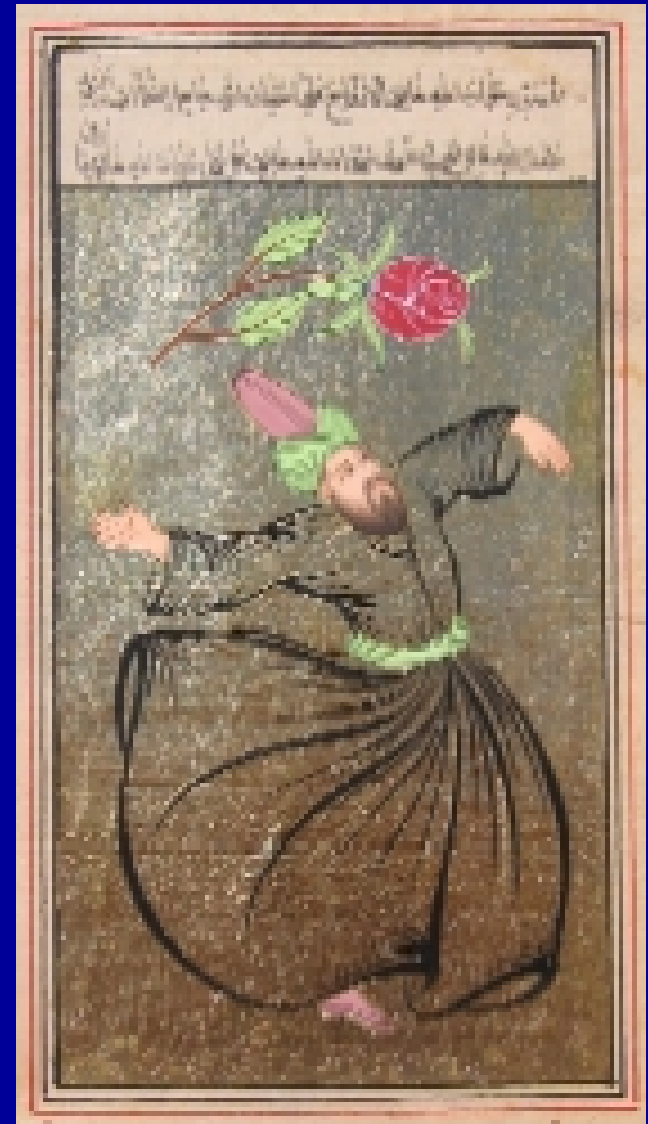
Balkan Countries with sizable Muslim Populations

- Bosnia-Herzegovina: Slavic in origin, 48% of population referred to as Bošnjak
- Macedonia: many of which are ethnically Albanian and constitute 16.9% of the population.
- Serbia and Montenegro: many of which are Albanian ethnically but many are Slavic as well. 22% of the population.
- Bulgaria: known as Pomaks and consider themselves Turkish in origin, though many of them are Slavic. 12.2% of the population.

The exact numbers are unknown because censuses have not been done for years.

Sufism in the Balkans

- Just like in contemporary Turkey, the Mystic sect of Islam, Sufism was very prominent in Bosnia, and continues today.
- Mystic sects of Islam believe in “intoxication” through dance or other means to
- Though they are not very numerous, the Naqshibandi order can be seen in contemporary Bosnia.





Baščaršija
Sarajevo, Bosnia

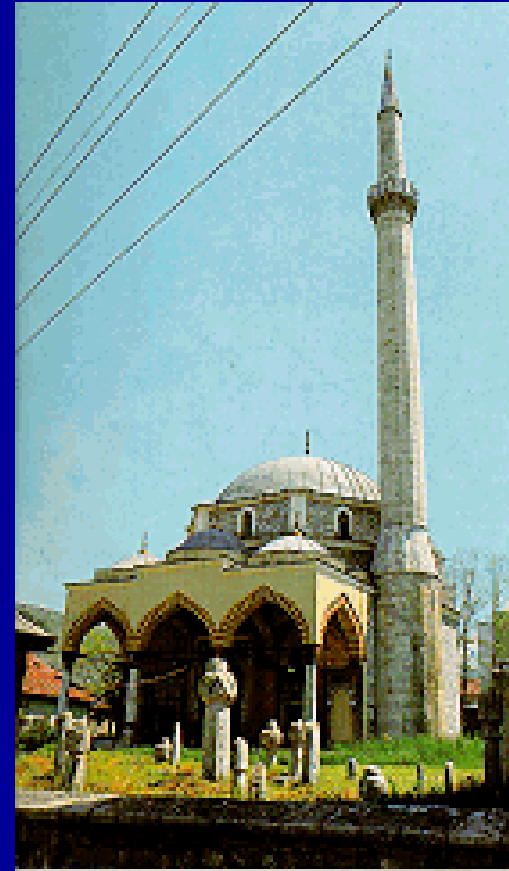
Islam in the Balkans today

- Islamic traditions are alive and well throughout the Balkans.
- In Bosnia Islamic identity is continually being renewed and strongly defined.
- Many academic studies are being made about Bulgaria's Muslims
- The recent war in Macedonia was said to be fought between the Orthodox and the Muslims

Mosques in the Serbia, Montenegro



Bayrakli Mosque
Belgrade, Serbia



Husein-Pasha Mosque
Pljevlja, Montenegro

Mosques in Macedonia and Bulgaria



Mustafa Pasha Mosque, 1492
Skopje, Macedonia



Mosque in the Garden
Plovdiv, Bulgaria



The Banybashi Mosque
Sofia, Bulgaria